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Contact: Sean Neary/Meaghan Smith

(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS BACKS NOMINEES FOR U.S. TAX COURT, INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

Finance Chairman: Nominees "Will Play Important Roles in Protecting the Interests of Millions of Americans"

WASHINGTON – In a Senate Finance Committee hearing today, Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) backed the nominations of Joseph Nega to serve on the U.S. Tax Court, Judge Michael Thornton to serve a second term on the U.S. Tax Court, and Scott Kieff to be a member of the U.S. International Trade Commission. Senator Baucus said the nominees will fill critical roles protecting taxpayers and fighting for U.S. businesses and workers.

"Between them, these nominees have decades of experience," Senator Baucus said. **"If confirmed, they will play important roles in protecting the interests of millions of Americans."**

Judge Michael Thornton has served on the U.S. Tax Court since 1998, including as chief judge from June 2012 to March 2013. He previously served in the Treasury Department between 1995 and 1998 as deputy tax legislative counsel in the Office of Tax Policy, as well as attorney-adviser. From 1988 to 1995, he served on the House Ways and Means Committee staff first as tax counsel, then as chief minority tax counsel. He also has experience in the private sector. Judge Thornton received a B.S. and M.S. from University of Southern Mississippi, an M.A. from University of Tennessee, and a J.D. from Duke University School of Law.

Joseph Nega is a 28-year veteran staff member of the Joint Committee on Taxation. He currently serves as senior legislation counsel. From 1989 to 2008 he was legislation counsel, and from 1985 to 1989 he was legislation attorney. Nega received a B.S.C. in Accounting from DePaul University, a J.D. from DePaul University School of Law, and an M.L.T. (taxation) from Georgetown University School of Law.

The United States Tax Court hears a variety of tax law-related cases and gives taxpayers a dedicated venue to dispute IRS claims. As judges on the Tax Court, Thornton and Nega would help ensure the fair administration of the nation's tax laws.

"Judge Thornton, you've done a great job at the Tax Court, rising up to become the chief judge. I am pleased the President re-nominated you. Mr. Nega, you have dedicated your entire career to public service and gained valuable experience that qualifies you to be a Tax Court judge," Senator Baucus said. **"The Tax Court provides Americans a forum to address tax issues, and its judges must ensure our tax laws are administered fairly. In the wake of the IRS scandal, public confidence in our tax system is low. You must be thorough, and you must give our citizens a fair day in court. Your work can go a long way in restoring the public's confidence."**

Scott Kieff is a professor at The George Washington University Law School and a Ray and Louis Knowles Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, where he directs the Project on Commercializing Innovation and serves on the Property Rights Task Force. He served as a member of the Patent Public Advisory Committee of the United States Patent and Trademark Office from 2007 to 2010. From 2005 to 2007, he was a mediator in the appellate mediation program of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. He also has private sector experience. Mr. Kieff received a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. As a member of the ITC, Kieff will help enforce U.S. trade laws and protect U.S. jobs from unfair practices and intellectual property theft.

“Scott Kieff has spent his career working on issues related to international trade, in both the public and private sectors and in academia. He is well qualified to serve on the International Trade Commission” Senator Baucus said. **“This committee will continue to move forward with an ambitious trade agenda, and we will look to the ITC to fairly and objectively enforce our trade laws.”**

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